



UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
United States Patent and Trademark Office
Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450
www.uspto.gov

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/971,959	10/09/2001	Isao Namba	826.1763	4104

21171 7590 08/02/2004

STAAS & HALSEY LLP
SUITE 700
1201 NEW YORK AVENUE, N.W.
WASHINGTON, DC 20005

EXAMINER

FLEURANTIN, JEAN B

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
----------	--------------

2172

DATE MAILED: 08/02/2004

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/971,959

Applicant(s)

NAMBA, ISAO

Examiner

Jean B Fleurant

Art Unit

2172

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 03 May 2004.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-29 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☒ Claim(s) 8, 13, 19 and 24 is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-7, 9-12, 14-18, 20-23 and 25-29 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

Art Unit: 2172

DETAILED ACTION

Response to Amendment

1. Claim 29 is added.

Claims 1-29 remain pending for examination. Examiner discusses the limitations of claim 29 in the following rejection.

Response to Arguments

2. Applicant's arguments filed 5/3/04 with respect to claims 1-29 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive. Because of the following reasons:

Applicants stated that the present claimed invention patentably distinguishes over Tsuda because Tsuda directed to a system in which the user sets the priority level of strings used in a search before the search is conducted and the present invention informs the user of how the search result was obtained. In response, the examiner disagrees with the precedent argument. However, when read and analyzed in the light of the specification, the invention as claimed does not support applicants' assertion. Moreover, the claims do not capture the essence of the invention as argued in applicants' remark pages 9 and 10. It is important to note that applicants are interpreting the claims very narrow without considering the broad teachings of the reference used in the rejection. In paper No. 4, the examiner went through the claims phrase by phrase and referred to the prior art column and line number as to where he has drawn the correspondences between applicants' claims phrases and prior art. By failing to address these correspondences, applicants have failed to rebut the examiner's prima facie case of obviousness uses for a different purpose which does not alter the conclusion that its use in a prior art device

Art Unit: 2172

would be prima facie obvious from the purpose disclosed in the reference. Furthermore, the Tsuda discloses the recited limitations “Tsuda discloses a retrieval apparatus (see figure 2, col. 6, lines 1-2), comprising:

“a question sentence input unit receiving a question sentence for retrieval” as a means for inputting a sentence and selecting a character string similar, (see col. 2, lines 26-27);

“a retrieval execution unit retrieving data from a database” as a means for retrieving documents from a database (see col. 2, lines 29-30) “and extracting data similar to the question sentence inputted by the question sentence input unit” as a means for viewing the document having characteristic of a data (keyword) similar to the input, (see col. 2, lines 30-32);

“a word contribution degree calculation unit calculating a contribution degree of a word contributing to extraction by the retrieval execution unit in a retrieval result extracted by the retrieval execution unit” as a means for calculating the relevance levels of a documents of a retrieved candidate, (see col. 2, lines 60-62; col. 8, lines 27-33 and lines 45-52);

“and a word contribution degree output unit outputting the contribution degree calculated by the word contribution degree calculation unit together with a corresponding word” as a means for calculating the relevance level, in which the highlight level of the character string specified at a time of inputting is converted into the priority level of the character string, (see col. 8, lines 45 52).” Therefore, the aforementioned assertion is moot.

For the above reasons, it is believed that the last Office Action was proper.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

3. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

Claims 1-7, 9-12, 14-18, 20-23 and 25-28 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,950,187 issued to Tsuda ("hereinafter Tsuda").

As per claim 1, Tsuda discloses a retrieval apparatus (see figure 2, col. 6, lines 1-2), comprising:

"a question sentence input unit receiving a question sentence for retrieval" as a means for inputting a sentence and selecting a character string similar, (see col. 2, lines 26-27);

"a retrieval execution unit retrieving data from a database" as a means for retrieving documents from a database (see col. 2, lines 29-30) "and extracting data similar to the question sentence inputted by the question sentence input unit" as a means for viewing the document having characteristic of a data (keyword) similar to the input, (see col. 2, lines 30-32);

"a word contribution degree calculation unit calculating a contribution degree of a word contributing to extraction by the retrieval execution unit in a retrieval result extracted by the retrieval execution unit" as a means for calculating the relevance levels of a documents of a retrieved candidate, (see col. 2, lines 60-62; col. 8, lines 27-33 and lines 45-52);

"and a word contribution degree output unit outputting the contribution degree calculated by the word contribution degree calculation unit together with a corresponding

Art Unit: 2172

word” as a means for calculating the relevance level, in which the highlight level of the character string specified at a time of inputting is converted into the priority level of the character string, (see col. 8, lines 45-52).

As per claim 2, Tsuda discloses, “wherein said word contribution degree output unit outputs the corresponding word in a display format reflecting the contribution degree” as in the system the priority level which can display a font having a size from of 8 points to a maximum of 72 points, (see col. 8, lines 64-66).

As per claim 3, Tsuda discloses, “wherein said word contribution degree output unit outputs the corresponding word using a font reflecting the contribution degree” as a means for outputting the document, in which a size of a character font is considered, (see col. 6, lines 58-59).

As per claim 4, Tsuda discloses, “wherein said word contribution degree output unit outputs the corresponding word in a character size reflecting the contribution degree” as a means for outputting the document, in which a size of a character font is considered, (see col. 6, lines 58-61).

As per claim 5, Tsuda discloses, “wherein said word contribution degree output unit outputs the corresponding word in a color reflecting the contribution degree” as the type of highlight level, in which other attribute is allowable to use such as a color of the character, (see col. 7, lines 1-3).

As per claim 6, Tsuda discloses, “wherein said word contribution degree output unit is a display device” as the output section 13 displays on a display the highest level documents, (see col. 6, lines 23-25).

Art Unit: 2172

As per claim 7, Tsuda discloses, “wherein said retrieval execution unit divides the question sentence inputted by said question sentence input unit into words, retrieves data from the database for each of the divided words and extracts data similar to the word” as a means for viewing the document having characteristic of a data (keyword) similar to the input, (see col. 2, lines 30-32).

As per claim 9, Tsuda discloses “a retrieval apparatus for extracting data similar to a question word by retrieval” as a means for viewing the document having characteristic of a data (keyword) similar to the input, (see col. 2, lines 30-32) “and displaying a contribution degree of a word contributing to the extraction together with a corresponding word on a screen” (col. 10, line 61 to col. 11, line 2), comprising:

“a word designation unit designating a word displayed on the screen” as the user selects the file name in which displays in the window 44 and the content is also displayed, (see figure 14, col. 10, lines 61 to col. 11, line 6);

“and a weighting unit weighting the word designated by the word designation unit for the retrieval” as a means for retrieving expression in which a weighted Boolean is used, (see col. 11, lines 25-28).

As per claim 10, Tsuda discloses, “a retrieval apparatus” (see figure 2, col. 6, lines 1-2), comprising:

“a question sentence input unit inputting a question sentence for retrieval” as a means for inputting a sentence and selecting a character string similar, (see col. 2, lines 26-27);

“a retrieval execution unit dividing the inputted question sentence inputted by the question sentence input unit into words” as a means for viewing the document having

Art Unit: 2172

characteristic of a data (keyword) similar to the input, (see col. 2, lines 30-32), “retrieving data from a database storing data to be retrieved for each of the divided words” as a means for retrieving documents from a database (see col. 2, lines 29-30), “and extracting data similar to the question sentence inputted by said question sentence input unit” as a means for viewing the document having characteristic of a data (keyword) similar to the input, (see col. 2, lines 30-32);

“a word contribution degree calculation unit calculating a contribution degree of a word contributing to the extraction by the retrieval execution unit in a retrieval result extracted by the retrieval execution unit” as a means for calculating the relevance levels of a documents of a retrieved candidate, (see col. 2, lines 60-62; col. 8, lines 27-33 and lines 45-52);

“a word contribution degree output unit displaying the contribution degree calculated by the word contribution degree calculation unit together with a corresponding word on a screen” as a means for calculating the relevance level, in which the highlight level of the character string specified at a time of inputting is converted into the priority level of the character string, and the priority level in which the system displays a font having a size from of 8 points to a maximum of 72 points, (see col. 8, lines 45 52 and lines 64-66);

“a word designation unit designating the word displayed on the screen” as the user selects the file name in which displays in the window 44 and the content is also displays, (see figure 14, col. 10, lines 61 to col. 11, line 6);

“and a weighting unit weighting the word designated by the word designation unit for the retrieval” as a means for retrieving expression in which a weighted Boolean is used, (see col. 11, lines 25-28).

Art Unit: 2172

As per claim 11, Tsuda discloses, “wherein said weighting unit weights a word so that data of the retrieval result can be ranked as the top” as retrieval in a document, in which the highest word weight is given to a word occurring in a headline of the document, (see col. 1, lines 41-44).

As per claim 12, Tsuda discloses, “the retrieval apparatus further comprising a re-retrieval execution unit retrieving data from a database storing data to be retrieved” as a means for retrieving documents from a database (see col. 2, lines 29-30) “and extracting data similar to a word weighted by said weighting unit” as a means for retrieving expression in which a weighted Boolean is used, (see col. 11, lines 25-28).

As per claim 14, Tsuda discloses, a retrieval method (see col. 6, lines 1-2), comprising:

“receiving a question sentence for retrieval” as a means for inputting a sentence and selecting a character string similar, (see col. 2, lines 26-27);

“retrieving data from a database storing data to be retrieved” as a means for retrieving documents from a database (see col. 2, lines 29-30);

“extracting data similar to the inputted question sentence” as a means for viewing the document having characteristic of a data (keyword) similar to the input, (see col. 2, lines 30-32);

“calculating a contribution degree of a word contributing to the extraction in the extracted retrieval result” as a means for calculating the relevance levels of a documents of a retrieved candidate, (see col. 2, lines 60-62; col. 8, lines 27-33 and lines 45-52);

“and outputting the calculated contribution degree together with a corresponding word” as a means for calculating the relevance level, in which the highlight level of the character string

Art Unit: 2172

specified at a time of inputting is converted into the priority level of the character string, (see col. 8, lines 45-52).

As per claim 15, Tsuda discloses, "wherein the corresponding word is outputted in a display format reflecting the contribution degree" as in the system the priority level which can display a font having a size from of 8 points to a maximum of 72 points, (see col. 8, lines 64-66).

As per claim 16, Tsuda discloses, "wherein the corresponding word is outputted using a font reflecting the contribution degree" as a means for outputting the document, in which a size of a character font is considered, (see col. 6, lines 58-59).

As per claim 17, Tsuda discloses, "wherein the corresponding word is outputted to a display device" as the output section 13 displays on a display the highest level documents, (see col. 6, lines 23-25).

As per claim 18, Tsuda discloses, "wherein the inputted question sentence is divided into words, the database is retrieved for each of the divided words and similar data are extracted" as a means for viewing the document having characteristic of a data (keyword) similar to the input, (see col. 2, lines 30-32).

As per claim 20, Tsuda discloses, "a retrieval method for extracting data similar to a question word by retrieval" as a means for viewing the document having characteristic of a data (keyword) similar to the input, (see col. 2, lines 30-32) "and displaying a contribution degree of a word contributing to the extraction together with a corresponding word on a screen" (col. 10, line 61 to col. 11, line 2) comprising:

Art Unit: 2172

“designating a word displayed on the screen” as the user selects the file name in which displays in the window 44 and the content is also displayed, (see figure 14, col. 10, lines 61 to col. 11, line 6);

“and weighting the designated word for the retrieval” as a means for retrieving expression in which a weighted Boolean is used, (see col. 11, lines 25-28).

As per claim 21, Tsuda discloses, “a retrieval method” (col. 6, lines 1-2), comprising:

“inputting a question sentence for retrieval” as a means for inputting a sentence and selecting a character string similar, (see col. 2, lines 26-27);

“dividing the inputted question sentence into words”, as a means for inputting more than one retrieval word, (see col. 2, lines 57-59);

“retrieving data from a database storing data to be retrieved for each of the divided words” as a means for retrieving documents from a database, (see col. 2, lines 29-30);

“extracting data similar to the inputted question sentence” as a means for viewing the document having characteristic of a data (keyword) similar to the input, (see col. 2, lines 30-32);

“calculating a contribution degree of a word contributing to the extraction in the extracted retrieval result” as a means for calculating the relevance levels of a documents of a retrieved candidate, (see col. 2, lines 60-62; col. 8, lines 27-33 and lines 45-52);

“displaying the calculated contribution degree together with a corresponding word on a screen” as a means for calculating the relevance level, in which the highlight level of the character string specified at a time of inputting is converted into the priority level of the character string, and the priority level can display a font size, (see col. 8, lines 45-66);

Art Unit: 2172

“designating the word displayed on the screen” as the user selects the file name in which displays in the window 44 and the content is also displayed, (see figure 14, col. 10, lines 61 to col. 11, line 6);

“and weighting the designated word for the retrieval” as a means for calculating the relevance level, in which the highlight level of the character string specified at a time of inputting is converted into the priority level of the character string, (see col. 8, lines 45-52).

As per claim 22, Tsuda discloses, “wherein the weight is attached so that the data of the retrieval result can be ranked as the top” as retrieval in a document, in which the highest word weight is given to a word occurring in a headline of the document, (see col. 1, lines 41-44).

As per claim 23, Tsuda discloses, “wherein a database storing data to be retrieved is retrieved” as a means for retrieving documents from a database (see col. 2, lines 29-30) “and data similar to the words to which the weight is attached are extracted” as a means for retrieving expression in which a weighted Boolean is used, (see col. 11, lines 25-28).

As per claim 25, Tsuda discloses, a retrieval program for enabling a computer to execute a function (see col. 6, lines 1-2), the function comprising:

“receiving a question sentence for retrieval” as a means for inputting a sentence and selecting a character string similar, (see col. 2, lines 26-27);

“retrieving data from a database storing data to be retrieved” as a means for retrieving documents from a database (see col. 2, lines 29-30);

“extracting data similar to the inputted question sentence” as a means for viewing the document having characteristic of a data (keyword) similar to the input, (see col. 2, lines 30-32);

Art Unit: 2172

“calculating a contribution degree of a word contributing to the extraction in the extracted retrieval result” as a means for calculating the relevance levels of a documents of a retrieved candidate, (see col. 2, lines 60-62; col. 8, lines 27-33 and lines 45-52);

“and outputting the calculated contribution degree together with a corresponding word” as a means for calculating the relevance level, in which the highlight level of the character string specified at a time of inputting is converted into the priority level of the character string, (see col. 8, lines 45 52).

As per claim 26, Tsuda discloses, “a retrieval program which enables a computer for extracting data similar to a question sentence by retrieval” as a means for viewing the document having characteristic of a data (keyword) similar to the input, (see col. 2, lines 30-32) “and displaying a contribution degree of a word contributing to the extraction together with a corresponding word, to execute a function” (col. 10, line 61 to col. 11, line 2), the function comprising:

“designating the word displayed on the screen” as the user selects the file name in which displays in the window 44 and the content is also displayed, (see figure 14, col. 10, lines 61 to col. 11, line 6);

“and weighting the designated word for the retrieval” as a means for retrieving expression in which a weighted Boolean is used, (see col. 11, lines 25-28).

As per claim 27, Tsuda discloses, “a retrieval program for enabling a computer to execute a function” (see figure 2, col. 6, lines 1-2), the function comprising:

“inputting a question sentence for retrieval” as a means for inputting a sentence and selecting a character string similar, (see col. 2, lines 26-27);

Art Unit: 2172

“dividing the inputted question sentence into words” as a means for inputting more than one retrieval word, (see col. 2, lines 57-59);

“retrieving data from a database” as a means for retrieving documents from a database (see col. 2, lines 29-30) “storing data to be retrieved for each of the divided words” as a means for viewing the document having characteristic of a data (keyword) similar to the input, (see col. 2, lines 30-32);

“extracting data similar to the inputted question sentence” as a means for inputting a sentence and selecting a character string similar, (see col. 2, lines 26-27);

“calculating a contribution degree of a word contributing to the extraction in the extracted retrieval result” as a means for calculating the relevance levels of a documents of a retrieved candidate, (see col. 2, lines 60-62; col. 8, lines 27-33 and lines 45-52);

“displaying the calculated contribution degree together with a corresponding word on a screen” as a means for calculating the relevance level, in which the highlight level of the character string specified at a time of inputting is converted into the priority level of the character string, and the priority level can display a font size, (see col. 8, lines 45-66);

“designating the word displayed on the screen” as the user selects the file name in which displays in the window 44 and the content is also displayed, (see figure 14, col. 10, lines 61 to col. 11, line 6);

“and weighting the designated word for the retrieval” as a means for calculating the relevance level, in which the highlight level of the character string specified at a time of inputting is converted into the priority level of the character string, (see col. 8, lines 45 52).

Art Unit: 2172

As per claim 28, Tsuda discloses a retrieval apparatus (see figure 2, col. 6, lines 1-2), comprising:

“question sentence input means for inputting a question sentence for retrieval” as a means for inputting a sentence and selecting a character string similar, (see col. 2, lines 26-27);

“a retrieval execution means for retrieving data from a database storing data to be retrieved” as a means for retrieving documents from a database (see col. 2, lines 29-30) “and extracting data similar to the question sentence inputted by the question sentence input means” as a means for viewing the document having characteristic of a data (keyword) similar to the input, (see col. 2, lines 30-32);

“word contribution degree calculation means for calculating a contribution degree of a word contributing to extraction by the retrieval execution means in a retrieval result extracted by the retrieval execution means” as a means for calculating the relevance levels of a documents of a retrieved candidate, (see col. 2, lines 60-62; col. 8, lines 27-33 and lines 45-52);

“word contribution degree output means for outputting the contribution degree calculated by the word contribution degree calculation means together with a corresponding word” as a means for calculating the relevance level, in which the highlight level of the character string specified at a time of inputting is converted into the priority level of the character string, (see col. 8, lines 45 52).

4. Claim 29 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,873,076 issued to Barr et al. (“hereinafter Barr”).

As per claim 29, Tsuda discloses, a retrieval method, comprising:

Art Unit: 2172

“performing a multiple word search of a database for a user” as is directed to a method for performing a search of a database, (see col. 6, lines 42-46);

“supplying the search results to the user” as the search result list is displayed in a first window open on a user display, (see col. 4, lines 47-48);

“indicating to the user a weight of each word contributing to the search results” as a method for performing a search of a database in an information retrieval system in response to a query having at least one query word with a query word weight and for applying the query word to the database and selecting information from the information retrieval system in accordance with the query word. A query word is selected and assigned a weight. The weight is adjusted depending on whether the query word is a proper noun or slow word. The adjusting can be an increase or a decrease in the weight. Information is selected from the information retrieval system in accordance with the adjusted weight, (see col. 6, lines 42-46).

[Remainder of page intentionally left blank]

Allowable Subject Matter

5. The following is a statement of reasons for the indication of allowable subject matter:

As per claims 8, 13, 19 and 24,

the prior art of record does not teach or suggest in combination with other elements,
wherein

said word contribution degree calculation unit further comprises

a high/low-similarity group acquisition unit obtaining both a group of documents with high similarity a group of documents with low similarity from the retrieval result extracted by said retrieval execution unit; and

a contribution degree calculation unit calculating a difference between a ratio of the divided word in the high-similarity group and the ratio of the word in the low-similarity group and designating the difference as a contribution degree of the word as recited in claim 8.

The prior art of record does not teach or suggest in combination with other elements,
a re-retrieval execution unit retrieving data from a database storing data to be retrieved and extracting data similar to a word weighted by said weighting unit,

wherein

said weighting unit sequentially weights a plurality of prescribed data of the retrieval result so that the data of the retrieval result can be ranked as the top and designates an average of the plurality of weights of the plurality of data as a weight value of the word as recited in claim 13.

The prior art of record does not teach or suggest in combination with other elements
wherein the calculation

Art Unit: 2172

obtains both a group of documents with high similarity and a group of documents with low similarity from the retrieval result,

calculates a difference between a ratio of each divided word in the high-similarity group and a ratio of the word in the low-similarity group and designates the difference as a contribution degree of the divided word as recited in claim 19.

The prior art of record does not teach or suggest in combination with other elements, wherein a database storing data to be retrieved is retrieved, data similar to the words to which the weight is attached are extracted, the weight is sequentially attached to a plurality of prescribed data of the retrieval result so that the data of the retrieval result can be ranked as the top and an average of the plurality of weight of the plurality of data is designated as a weight value of the word as recited in claim 24.

Art Unit: 2172

Conclusion

6. **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL.** Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire **THREE MONTHS** from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within **TWO MONTHS** of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the **THREE-MONTH** shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than **SIX MONTHS** from the mailing date of this final action.

Art Unit: 2172

CONTACT INFORMATION

7. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Jean B Fleurantin whose telephone number is 703-308-6718.


The examiner can normally be reached on 7:30-6:00.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, John B Breene can be reached on 703-305-9790. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).


Jean Bolte Fleurantin

July 19, 2004


SHAHID ALAM
PRIMARY EXAMINER